

land may feel are also functionally obsolete.

□ 1800

Here in Congress we can build a bridge together, and while we're at it, let's build a better Nation together as well. Because it's not about the party you're in, it's about doing the Nation's business and building a Nation for all of us.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to yield 3 minutes to one of the most distinguished and senior Members, not only in Congress, but the senior member of the Florida delegation, former chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Mr. YOUNG, my friend.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Florida for yielding the time to me.

I rise in strong support of the legislation to provide relief in response to the tragedy surrounding the collapse of Interstate 35W Bridge spanning the Mississippi River in Minneapolis.

The people in my area of Florida remember this type of grief, and we share the grief of the people of Minnesota. It was during a violent storm at 7:38 a.m. the morning of May 9, 1980, that a freighter, the *Summit Venture*, slammed into the Sunshine Skyway Bridge which spans Tampa Bay to connect my district to Manatee County in the south, across Tampa Bay. Thirty-five people in their vehicles fell more than 1,200 feet into the waters of Tampa Bay that morning, fell to their deaths.

The Sunshine Skyway is a Florida landmark. The scenes of the mangled bridge missing 1,260 feet of the center span of the southbound lanes of the bridge was a daily reminder of the tragedy, and we remember, and we remember for the people of Minnesota.

Only two people survived the accident in Florida, one whose car skidded to a halt at the bridge's edge and the other who survived his pick-up truck's fall into the water and swam to safety.

For 7 years, the damaged span stood as a constant reminder. Congress, however, began the healing process very shortly after that tragedy, as we do today for the Minnesota tragedy.

I thank and compliment and commend Chairman OBERSTAR and Mr. MICA, my good friend and colleague from Florida, who worked so hard on all of these issues and for moving this legislation quickly in a bipartisan way to bring support for the people of Minnesota.

The House responded to my request for funding to help rebuild the Sunshine Skyway Bridge quickly in the same type of fashion. So, as I said, we remember and we share the grief that you suffer today because we went through it back in 1980; and this Member stands ready to help in any way that we can to not only pass this authorization bill but to pass the appropriations that go along with it.

I thank my friend, Mr. MICA, for yielding the time to me. He is an outstanding leader in our delegation; and

he does, I think, an exceptional job for all of us.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida has 2 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Minnesota has 2½ minutes remaining.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I will yield myself the balance of our time.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, Mr. OBERSTAR, I thank you for paying attention to the important responsibility you have, not only as Chair of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee but as a good steward for the people of your State in a time of need.

And, you know, it's amazing what we can do in this House. It's absolutely incredible. Mr. YOUNG has been here for many years, and I have always looked up to him as one of our leaders. We started some years ago, senior to me, but I followed his career and what he has been able to do on a bipartisan basis.

And when we do have an emergency, whether it's 9/11 or whether it's a bridge that collapses in Minnesota, it's amazing what this House of Representatives can do when it comes together in a bipartisan fashion. That tragedy just occurred a matter of hours ago, and here we are, in our system, working together, helping those people. We're not going to solve this all by the Federal Government; and, as I said, this is only an authorization. But people are in need, and we came together, as this body is designed to do.

But, as I said, the bridge is just the tip of the iceberg, so to speak. Our Nation's infrastructure is collapsing. Our Nation's infrastructure is obsolete. We have got to come together.

We came together, Mr. OBERSTAR and I, with a Water Resources bill that hadn't been passed in 7 years, but we brought it here, it is now pending final approval, to build the Nation's dams and infrastructure, also important. And we see that if you don't pay now, you will pay later.

So we can do this. We can make the investment to build the infrastructure that makes our economy grow, that makes this a great country and allows free enterprise to give us the great life that we've had in this wonderful country.

So I look forward, Mr. OBERSTAR, to finalizing this with you and helping the people in this time of need and also in taking on a leadership position as we make the investment in our country that is so necessary in our infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of our time.

I think the applause on our side for all of the speakers shows the depth of feeling, the depth of appreciation that the Minnesota delegation feels toward each other, toward others in the body

who have spoken tonight, toward our ranking member, Mr. MICA, to whom, once again, I express my appreciation for the responsiveness and to prompt action on this matter.

And to the gentleman from Florida, Mr. YOUNG, I remember so well the Sunshine Skyway Bridge tragedy and later included it in a hearing that then Mr. Clinger, my ranking member on the Investigation and Oversight Subcommittee, held hearings that included that tragedy. I was here to vote on the funding for that restoration of that bridge, and I appreciate the gentleman's recollection.

We will look back, I guess, in a few days, on this moment as a welcome respite from the cacophony of dissidence that we have heard in the last several hours in this body. Unfortunately, tragedy, loss of life and injury has brought us together, but it shows the greatness of this House of Representatives, that it can come together and find common cause and move ahead.

I hope that respite from cacophony will prevail in the other body as we send this legislation forward and that there will not be, as has been threatened, procedural issues raised or jurisdictional matters that may be raised that might deter a provision of this legislation to provide respite from the congestion that will result in the reconstruction of this bridge and that already is occurring in the city of Minneapolis.

The House provided respite for Oakland, San Francisco in the collapse of the 580 and 880 structures just earlier this year, in April. We provide almost identical language and support in this legislation. I just hope the other body will not raise objections and move this legislation forward, because those are relatively minor matters that be can resolved in the management by DOT of that transit language.

I want to thank all our colleagues for the dignity of this discussion tonight and for the support expressed for the people of Minnesota by the rest of the Nation. We thank you, thank all our colleagues, and we ask for a wholehearted vote in support of this legislation.

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the good people of Minnesota who have banded together to begin the healing process. When that bridge fell, every citizen of my State felt the grief and the pain together. It has certainly been a difficult couple of days for everyone, but I am so proud of the first responders, of the volunteers, and of my colleagues here in the House. I'd like to give a special thanks to Chairman OBERSTAR, for acting so quickly. He has represented Minnesota, and the House, very well. I'd also like to say that Representative ELLISON has done a remarkable job in representing his district during these last 48 hours.

It is a shame that it sometimes takes the worst events to bring out the best in people, but I am so proud of the wonderful actions Minnesotans have taken to help the victims of